

CONNECTION

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

October 2007

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



DRPT's strategic assessment has consolidated four divisions into three: Rail, Finance and Administration, and Transit and Congestion Management. I am pleased to report that this realignment is paying off and that projects are advancing across our core business areas. Below are some highlights of the newly formed Transit and Congestion Management Division.

This quarter we celebrated major milestones for transit projects, including federal approval for Norfolk Light Rail construction, submission of the Final Design Request for Phase 1 of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project, breaking ground on a new facility for Blackstone Area Bus and the opening of the Charlottesville Downtown Transit Station. At the end of October, we will celebrate the opening of a new facility for Fredericksburg Regional Transit.

Work on Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plans in 22 planning districts is advancing and will be completed in spring 2008. These plans will emphasize mobility options for elderly, low income and disabled Virginians.

Initial results are in from DRPT's State of the Commute Survey and they are impressive. The average FY2007 telework participation rate in Virginia is 12%, which is 50% higher than the national average. In Northern Virginia, 20.7% of commuters are teleworking- a 57% increase since 2004.

Finally, DRPT met or exceeded all goals in Virginia Performs for FY2007. The Transit and Congestion Management Division exceeded its targets for increasing transit trips in urban and rural markets and the number of vehicle miles saved by customers of congestion management agencies. DRPT's first annual transit performance report will be published at the end of October.

The next quarter will see continued focus on initiating and completing numerous planning studies and the beginning of our new transit performance review program.

Matthew O. Tucker

KEY ISSUES

First Agency Business Plan Published

In October 2007, DRPT published the first annual business plan in agency history. The FY2007 Business Plan provides an overview of DRPT's projects, priorities and goals for the fiscal year and a work plan to achieve those goals. The Business Plan builds on the priorities identified in the Budget Bill, statewide transportation planning documents and DRPT's biennial Strategic Plan, and then provides strategies to achieve specific annual goals based on the resources outlined in the agency's Annual Budget.

The Business Plan complements each fiscal year's budget and, in future years, will be published on the same schedule as the Annual Budget.

DRPT's progress against the Strategic Plan, Business Plan and Annual Budget will be tracked and reported in the agency's Annual Report, published each fall. DRPT's first Annual Report is scheduled to be published on October 31, 2007.

The development of the Business Plan is consistent with several strategic changes that DRPT is implementing as a result of the agency's recently completed Strategic Assessment.

DRPT Launches Improved Financial Review Program

In response to some of the needs for improvement identified in DRPT's 2007 Strategic Assessment, the agency has been developing improvements to its Financial Compliance Review Program for grantees.

The improved program will better ensure that DRPT grantees are complying with state and federal guidelines, as well as the requirements of DRPT Master Agreements, and that proper supporting documentation is maintained. DRPT has leveraged the financial resources of KPMG and other financial services firms in developing and implementing the new financial review program.

Notices regarding the new program were issued to grantees in September 2007 and individual grantee reviews will begin in November.

THE SMARTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS • October 2007

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

Virginia Performs Results: DRPT recently submitted FY2007 performance information to Virginia Performs, the Commonwealth's program to gather and report on agency performance. DRPT met or exceeded all performance measures included in Virginia Performs for the 2007 fiscal year. To see all of DRPT's performance measures online, visit www.vaperforms.virginia.gov.

Fall SYIP Public Meetings: Public meetings for the FY 2009-2014 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) began in October. The meetings give citizens and elected officials the opportunity to comment on potential transportation projects to be included in the SYIP over the next six years. Candidate projects include interstate highway, primary road, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and public transportation initiatives. A draft of the new improvement plan will be available next spring. To view this year's fall SYIP public meeting schedule, visit DRPT's Web site at www.drpt.virginia.gov.

Local Milestones: This quarter, transit systems across the Commonwealth celebrated project milestones. Each new milestone signifies growth in the availability of transit services to Virginians. Local events included the following:

- ◆ Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) groundbreaking ceremony for the new Corporate Headquarters and Bus Facility
- ◆ Four County Transit facility expansion groundbreaking
- ◆ Blackstone Area Bus groundbreaking ceremony on new Administrative and Maintenance facility

Human Service Transportation Workshops: From October to December 2007, DRPT will be hosting 14 Human Service Workshops with local planning district commissions to help transit providers comply with SAFETEA-LU requirements when applying for federal New Freedom or Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) grants. The fall workshops will focus on building an implementation strategy to overcome the gaps in service identified in previous workshops. For a complete list of workshop dates and locations, visit the DRPT Web site at www.drpt.virginia.gov.

DRPT Training Program Improvements: DRPT is working to bring more training opportunities to the Commonwealth for transit operators and stakeholders. To kick off DRPT's training program improvements, a one-day training course was held on September 27, 2007 at DRPT's Richmond headquarters on Transit Alternatives Analysis, the planning requirement for projects seeking New and Small Starts funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The FTA-led training course covered topics from planning and development of New Starts projects and FTA expectations to financial planning and environmental analysis. Additional DRPT training programs are under development and will be available soon.

STATUS OF KEY PROJECTS AND STUDIES

◆ **Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project:** DRPT has completed the transition of project staff from DRPT to MWAA as part of the project transfer agreement signed on June 28, 2007. The transfer of project staff will ensure consistent and expert project management as the project nears the construction phase. The project's Request to Enter Final Design was submitted to the Federal Transit Administration in September 2007.

◆ **Norfolk Light Rail Transit Project:** After more than a decade of studies and planning, the federal Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for "The Tide" was signed on October 1, 2007. The FFGA ensures that the project will have federal funding to support project costs and construction. The Tide will have 11 stations over 7.4 miles and is expected to carry up to 12,000 passengers per day.

◆ **Transit/TDM Performance Review Program:** DRPT issued a Request for Proposals in October 2007 for consultant services to help develop and implement the Transit/TDM Performance Review program. The program will help transit systems measure and improve their performance to meet local goals and objectives, while also providing new tools to communicate on the public benefits and needs of transit/TDM programs in Virginia.

◆ **I-81 Freight Rail Study:** The study team is continuing to gather and evaluate data to determine the potential levels of truck diversion to rail in the I-81 corridor, in cooperation with Norfolk Southern. The I-81 Freight Rail Study is scheduled for completion in fall 2007.

◆ **New Annual Transit Performance Report:** The first DRPT Annual Transit Performance Report is scheduled to be published on October 31, 2007. The new report will provide annual performance data on transit systems in Virginia.

◆ **Roanoke Region Intermodal Facility:** DRPT is continuing to evaluate all ten of the sites submitted as potential facility locations to determine which site would provide the most public benefits for the investment of public dollars. A decision is anticipated in fall/early winter.

◆ **I-95/I-395 Transit/TDM Study:** DRPT is evaluating study data and will develop cost, revenue and investment projections for the recommended alternative. The study is scheduled for completion in winter 2007.

◆ **TeleworkIVA:** DRPT will launch a new campaign this fall to encourage participation in the program. To date, the program has helped more than 116 businesses to consider, start or expand a formal telework program to employees, reducing congestion on the highways.